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REVIEWS.

Alec-Tweedie, Mrs. *The Maker of Modern Mexico.* Pp. xxi, 421. Price, \$5.00. New York: John Lane Company, 1906.

When a biographer is a personal friend of the man of whom he writes his work is at the same time aided and handicapped. The personality of the individual can, in some ways, be better interpreted, but at the same time friendship must, consciously or unconsciously, gloss over acts and characteristics which the true historian cannot overlook. This virtue and this fault are both present in Mrs. Alec-Tweedie's book on the great Mexican Dictator, President Porfirio Diaz. The humble childhood, romantic youth and powerful manhood of the general turned statesman are entertainingly and sympathetically presented, but the less pleasant features, the factional struggles, jealousies and intrigues, arbitrary government and iron-handed management of elections, go unmentioned or are noticed only to be condoned. As a biography, therefore, this volume is incomplete, but as an interpretation of the best phases of the character which has raised Mexico to a respected place among American republics it is to be highly commended.

Few men, indeed, have ever made their own lives so great a part of their country's history as has Porfirio Diaz. A description of his life involves references to almost every important figure which in the last seventy years has risen to defend or threaten the existence of the republic, Velasco, Morelos, Hidalgo, O'Hara, Bazaine, Miramón, Santa Anna, Juárez, Lerdo, Louis Napoleon, Maximilian, and many others. All are connected with the life of the man who first as general and then as president for over a quarter of a century has molded the Mexican state.

Not less interesting than the discussion of affairs intimately connected with the president himself are the author's descriptions of the conditions of present-day life in the republic. To many of her readers these chapters will appear to be the most valuable portion of the book. The treatment is not scholastic, nor is it intended to be so, but the incidents are drawn from the experiences of several extended visits to the country, and successfully portray the strong contrasts in Mexican society. Keen observation and an ability to see the people through impartial and yet appreciative eyes give us an excellent insight into various phases of the spirit of Mexican private and public life. The culture of the aristocracy, or perhaps, more exactly, of the oligarchy, is brought into strong relief against the poverty and ignorance of the great mass of the Mexican population. The passing of old and the coming of the new industrial Mexico is also well brought out. In fact, these discussions of the general conditions of the people and their government form so large a part of the book that it is quite as informing concerning the country as a whole as concerning its president.

The style is clear and entertaining, and, though the numerous byways through which the author leads us destroy the logical arrangement and proportion of the book, still she tells us much that is welcome concerning Mexico which it would have been necessary to omit had she confined herself more strictly to her subject. The text is illuminated with over a hundred

beautiful illustrations of persons and places prominent in the history of the country.

CHESTER LLOYD JONES.

University of Pennsylvania.

Collins, J. Byard. *The New Agriculture.* Pp. 374 Price, \$2.00. New York: Munn & Co., 1906.

"Back to the land and be an individual" is the burden of Mr. Collins's message. He states that "there are probably not less than two millions of people in this country at the present time who, by leaving their places which they now occupy as clerks, bookkeepers, salesmen and factory hands could, by earnestly and intelligently adopting the avocation of agriculture, better both their own condition and that of those dependent upon them."

This call to the land appears to be a city call of "go to it" rather than a country call to "come to it." It is much to be doubted if the writer at the present or at any time in the past has had regular engagements to milk the cows at 4.30 a. m., or even to go spray his trees in bug time. The urban tincture of the book is emphasized by the expression of sympathy with the viewpoint of the individual who has become a cog in a great system of corporations, graft and exploitation, where the individual has small chance to "carry out his own theories or strive for the advancement of his own ideals."

The basis for the call to the farm is the great scientific improvement that has recently placed new powers at the disposal of the farmer. This progress has received great notice of late in the newspaper and magazine press and in government bulletins, and Mr. Collins's book brings these matters into very useful and available form in thirty- to forty-page chapters on such topics as irrigation, the new fertilization, new creations, new varieties, new practices, new machinery, etc.

The book is a treatise rather than an experience, and savors considerably of poetry as well as of business, and he makes some mistakes. It will be of use, however, to any one who wishes to easily inform himself of recent progress in agriculture or cheer that ever-increasing hope that lies in urban hearts and makes men think of a farm home.

J. RUSSELL SMITH.

University of Pennsylvania.

Fairlie, John A. *Local Government in Counties, Towns and Villages.* Pp. xii, 287. Price, \$1.25. New York: The Century Company, 1906.

In this volume of the "American State Series" Professor Fairlie has undertaken a considerable task in 287 pages. First, in three chapters, or fifty pages, he attempts both to describe and to sketch the development of the forms of local government in England and in the United States from Roman times down to the present. Second, he offers us in four chapters, or eighty